

Veterans for Bernie —2016—

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Meet Mark Maxey, the Bearded Man at Bernie's OKC Rally

at 🕒 March 10, 2016

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Meet Mark Maxey the Bearded Man at Bernie's OKC Rally - Vets For B



Zack Exley
@zackexley

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"I told him I volunteer 84 hours a week. He said thank you. I started to cry." Thanks Mark! @ArtistOKC #FeelTheBern

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NATIONAL (VFB) – It's hard to imagine someone [seeing the picture](#) and caption of [Mark Maxey](#) with Bernie Sanders in Oklahoma City and not feeling some sort of emotional response. When I saw it, I wanted to know more about Mark and what drove him to dedicate so much time and effort towards Bernie's election.

So I sent him [a tweet](#). He responded, and after exchanging hellos, he gave me a call.

"We waited over 3 hours just to get in the door," he recalled of the OKC rally. The event served as a culmination of just three weeks of fast-paced, nonstop GOTV efforts for Bernie. So how did Mark and other volunteers end up helping [#TeamBernie pull out a victory](#) in so little time?



Jane Sanders with OK Volunteer Amy Hinton and husband

"That first day in February we had a rally with field organizers. The next day I started volunteering, and it turned into 7 days a week, 12 to 14 hour days."

"It wasn't just me," Mark made sure to point out. "I can honestly say that in three weeks, I don't think I'm exaggerating, we had at least 1000 volunteers knocking on doors, phone banking and reaching out to the local public to spread awareness about Bernie's platform and

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issues."

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"In those three weeks, we literally took Oklahoma away from Hillary."

"In those three weeks, we literally took Oklahoma away from Hillary."



Mark Maxey with Danielle and
[Cody Hansen](#)
, who is the founding member and drummer for the R&R band "
[Hinder](#)
"

For a number of years until last fall, Mark worked for a local Methodist Church. But when his and another church merged, cuts were made and Mark found himself unemployed.

"I was unemployed about 6 months," he told me. "I'd been flooding the market with my resume when a friend starting posting a lot about Bernie Sanders. So at that point I really dug deep to find out who and what Bernie was. I quickly understood that everything he was talking about, everything that he was for, was where my heart and mind had been for years."

Once Bernie's campaign was up and running, "I went to his website and said, 'Since I have time on my hands, let me just volunteer.'"

I asked Mark what drove a man like him to get engaged now in the Sanders campaign.



OKC Volunteer Team Leader Meeting

"People my age, I'm 53, it's getting harder and harder to find companies willing to invest their time in older Americans like me. Plus, being an ex-felon, although though my felony was over 20 years ago, there are still companies that won't even consider hiring me."

"When I was in Folsom, myself and five lifers started the first prayer group with [Father Thomas Keating](#). That's when we really saw positive changes in our lives and awakenings through meditation. Now similar meditation programs operate in 8 different prisons, and over 8,000 prisoners participate in meditation programs on a daily basis."

"There really are programs out there that can turn prisoner's lives around and to be a part of that is not only humbling, but it really defines what Bernie Sanders is all about. He speaks the truth about Criminal Justice reform, which we desperately need."



Bernie OKC Rally (Photo Credit, Doug Hoke, The Oklahoman)

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Long before crossing paths with the Senator, Mark like many Americans had grown dissatisfied with establishment politics. "I had become very disenfranchised with the Democratic party, politics in general. I come from long line of Oklahoma Dems and party machines, I had to turn my back on it years ago, because of the unethical behavior."

"Everything he was talking about, everything that he was for, was where my heart and mind had been for years."

"At the rally I was one of the many, *many* volunteers. One of the staff told me to go up to ropeline and try to get picture with Bernie."

"When he walked by I told him I had volunteered 84 hours a week."

"With tears in my eyes I told him the reason I worked so hard is I want to make sure he is our next President."

"He put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Thank you.'"



Bernie Meets Mark, Photo taken by Volunteer Amy Hinton

"I think that's part of the reason that the tears began to well inside me and fall down my face. That my whole life I have waited for a candidate with the moral and ethical fiber and the genuineness that he has."

"That's the thing I like best about the Bernie Sanders' campaign, first and foremost, out of all the candidates that are running, he is the only genuine human being running."



Mark Maxey meets Bernie Sanders

With Bernie's candidacy leading the way, Mark has never felt more optimistic.

"There is a real sense of hope that change is in the air."

"You can sense it, and feel it."

"We will change the face of America through Bernie and through the participation of all there grassroots people," he announced.

"If an unemployed ex-felon can do this, then America can get Bernie elected!"

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Sache Primeaux-Shaw, Mark, and Josh Vishnaw. All worked 84 hours a week for Bernie for three weeks straight.



Tyson Manker is a former combat marine, attorney, college professor, and candidate for **State's Attorney** in Morgan County Illinois. He serves as the National Director of Vets for Bernie. Follow him on Twitter [@mankerlaw](#).

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Richard Ritter says:

March 10, 2016 at 11:22 pm

Reply

Thank you Mark for all your hard work and long hours of devotion volunteering for Bernie Sanders, our next president. You are what our country needs.



jinnie says:

March 11, 2016 at 2:45 am

Reply

thank you for your hard work! 😊



Patte Rae says:

March 11, 2016 at 6:29 am

Reply

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My feelings exactly Mark, we need Bernie. Thank you for all your good energy!



Bruce Busto says:

[Reply](#)

March 11, 2016 at 9:00 am

Heart Warming Story Thank you Mark



isaac islas says:

[Reply](#)

March 11, 2016 at 9:33 am

mark, you an inspiration to us all. bernie is a man of integrity, of inspiration, and most of all, consistently the same person all his life



Birdie Pierce says:

[Reply](#)

March 11, 2016 at 9:49 am

People like you will make all the difference in how politics will start to change for the better. Thank you for your time and devotion.



Vico says:

[Reply](#)

March 11, 2016 at 5:59 pm

Thank you for all of your hard work Mark. Everyone appreciates the time you put towards volunteering. I'm happy to say that we're doing our best here in PA too.



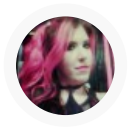
Barb says:

[Reply](#)

March 11, 2016 at 11:14 pm

Thank you for all of what you do.

Barb



Jenna says:

[Reply](#)

March 12, 2016 at 1:49 am

Mark, thank you and all the other volunteers for your tireless dedication to such a good man. I'm 34, had to leave college, as money just wasn't there. I'm currently in a rut of dead end jobs. I'm working to overcome, but it's almost impossible to not be disheartened when life passes you by, no matter what you do. Together, we can be the change America so desperately needs! God bless.



Deborah Blissmer says:

[Reply](#)

March 12, 2016 at 1:56 am

Thanks Mark for the hard work you have done. I am 63, was fortunate enough to be a teen during the 60's. I also have waited most of my life, have waited for a candidate with the moral and ethical fiber and the genuineness that he has."

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We had that with JFK although not on this scale. Tired of what politics had become.

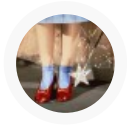


Brenda Spencer says:

[Reply](#)

March 12, 2016 at 2:57 am

Thank you Mark for all your hard work and thank you to all the volunteers working on Bernie's campaign. We need Bernie in the White House and we should make every effort to see that he gets in! God Bless you and God Bless America!!



Heather Young says:

[Reply](#)

March 12, 2016 at 11:30 am

We need honest people like Bernie Sanders in Washington, D.C. and we need the same kind of people in our state and community governments. Thank you for writing this story about Bernie's #1 volunteer, and good luck in your race for State's Attorney in Morgan County, Illinois, Tyson. Illinois needs every honest public servant it can get.



Rick Rogers says:

[Reply](#)

March 13, 2016 at 6:59 am

Thanks to Mark and all of the others there in Ok for all of your hard work to get Bernie elected. I know we couldn't have beat Hillary without you! We still have along way to go, I pray to God that we are successful! I have been to Norman, OK many times for training @ Nced for the Postal Service and I like your state. I am doing what I can to help Bernie here In Ohio, please pray that we are successful!



Debbie Stinnett says:

[Reply](#)

March 20, 2016 at 12:56 am

Thank you Mark. Your hard work is appreciated! This s the most inspiring man and candidate that I have seen in my lifetime. I'm 59. God bless you!!! Reading your story touched my heart!



Jessica says:

[Reply](#)

April 2, 2016 at 5:05 am

Thank you so much, Mark!! I'm so proud of you. It really says so much about the person you have grown to be—that you have the strength in your soul to put you're all into making the world a better place for not only yourself, but others.

I appreciate that more than I can say. By sharing your story, your difficulties and struggles, you inspire! Like Bernie, you set an example for people to follow. I can't thank you enough.

Not only for everything you are doing for our awesome candidate but for sharing and inspiring me with your strength. I wish you only good things. I can only surmise by these words that you will aspire many and perhaps, that is where your path should fall. Lessons teach us and from them, we can teach others without judgement. Perhaps,like Bernie, you're meant to work in such a role...?

Just a thought. Many blessings, dear man.

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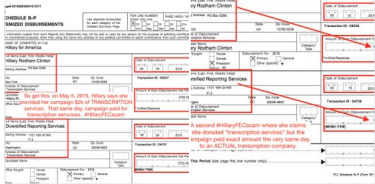
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